

## **Shelby Township signs off on hike-bike path**

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By Frank DeFrank, Macomb Daily Staff Writer

*River Bends Park will be part of countywide '70-Mile Trail Loop'*

Shelby Township officials have offered their support to a plan that will extend a hike-bike path into River Bends Park.

By a 6-0 vote, the township Board of Trustees last week adopted a resolution to support completion of the "70-Mile Trail Loop," a series of paths that will link Metro Beach and Stony Creek metroparks as well as traverse northern Macomb County communities.

The action commits the township board to no spending, but the resolution does signal Shelby's anticipated participation in the project.

"Before anybody spends any money, you have to have a plan," said Richard Stathakis, township supervisor.

Trustee Michael Flynn said the proposed path — portions in Shelby and those elsewhere — will enhance recreation throughout the region.

"It won't only benefit Shelby residents, but anybody in southeastern Michigan who enjoys being outdoors," Flynn said.

John Crumm, program coordinator for planning and environmental services for Macomb County, said the resolution caps a year of discussions during which local communities voiced their preferences to the location of the trail.

"We picked what we thought was the path of least resistance," Crumm said.

Crumm said about 44 of the 70 miles of trail already are completed and being used by county residents. Officials have secured a grant of nearly \$2 million to build the Utica-Shelby Township segment, he added. About \$30 million will be needed to complete the entire trail.

In another key development, officials at the Selfridge Air National Guard Base in Harrison Township have tentatively agreed to permit the trail to traverse its property along Lake St. Clair.

When completed, the trail will run from Metro Beach in Harrison Township west along Metro Parkway into Sterling Heights. From there, the trail turns northwest into Utica and Shelby Township and then links with the Macomb Orchard Trail that runs from Washington Township to Richmond.

The concept of the loop surfaced in 2004 as part of a Macomb County Trailways Master Plan, but the idea of

linking two of the county's main parks, Metro Beach and Stony Creek, dates back nearly a decade earlier, Crumm said.

County officials envision completion of the entire trail as a recreational and economic boon to Macomb as visitors attracted by the trail will avail themselves of restaurants, shops and other business establishments.

"That all happens when you get something that's larger (than current trails)," he said.